

# SOUTHERN INSIGHT

Newsletter of Southern Insight Meditation,  
Christchurch, New Zealand

Newsletter 36

Autumn 2010

## UPCOMING MEDITATION RETREATS 2010

All retreats are suitable for both new and experienced meditators and are accessible to people of any or no religious affiliation. The cost of each retreat covers all food and accommodation. Teachers receive donations.

### **The Spacious Heart with Jeremy Logan**

**Fri 4<sup>th</sup> June – Wed 9<sup>th</sup> June 2010**

**\$200 (\$100)\*  
Staveley Camp**

Through meditation our capacity to be compassionately present for our immediate experience grows. It enables us to be open to, and tenderly hold the most difficult parts of ourselves. It deepens and enriches our experience of life and also results in a spaciousness that enables us to respond creatively in situations we would otherwise react automatically from old conditioned patterns.

*“Jeremy was a very good teacher and encouraged us all - his Dharma talks were wonderful.”*

*“Jeremy sharing his pains struggles and doubts on his own journey helped me to understand that there is movement from those places of indecision. The sense of humour he brought into his teachings really brought it home to me that meditation and focus on the moment does not have to be all heavy going.”*

### **November Retreat with Stephen and Martine Bachelor**

**Mon 15 Nov – Sun 21 Nov 2010**

**\$250 (115)\*  
Staveley Camp**

This retreat will draw on ideas from Theravada, Tibetan and Zen Buddhism as a means of bringing into clearer focus the questions life poses to us. By coming to rest in a still, focused awareness of the present moment, we will embark on a series of reflections and enquiries into the nature of that experience. Such meditation will not be regarded as an end in itself but as a ground from which to engage with the world in a fresh, non-dogmatic and imaginative way.

**\*The actual cost of the retreat is the higher figure, however it is possible to pay a subsidised rate anywhere from the actual cost down to the bracketed figure.**

**The Closing Date for registration is one week before the retreat starts.**

Information about the teachers is inside the back cover of the newsletter.



Here we are in post-dharma gathering bliss! In these pages are memories of the week (if you were there) and an indication of what you missed (if you weren't).

Looking ahead we have a five day retreat with Jeremy Logan at Queen's Birthday weekend, an opportunity to go deep and see clearly into our life. Jeremy is indisputably our senior insight teacher here in New Zealand and what a wonderful resource he is. We are indeed fortunate. Highly recommended for both beginners and old-timers (as Subhana calls them).

In November Stephen and Martine Batchelor return after a gap of eight years to lead a six day retreat. Last time we had close to fifty people wanting to attend so we suggest booking early if you want to sit with them. For those of you unfamiliar with the Batchelors, see the biographies on the final page of the newsletter, but suffice to say these are internationally acclaimed teachers and authors and we are very lucky they are willing to travel so far to offer teachings.

The sitting group is back in full swing, lots of offer here with some of the senior students leading workshops similar in nature to those offered on the dharma gathering. See inside for more details. Beginner course starting soon.

Your steering group is working hard to organise all of these events, and would welcome support and assistance. If you'd like to help out in any way, please let Julie know at [angulijulie@gmail.com](mailto:angulijulie@gmail.com).

Many thanks to all who contributed material for this newsletter – keep it coming!



## The Mouse



May You Rest in Peace



Cremation

## DHARMA GATHERING

What a wonderful week. Blessed with beautiful sunshine, three inspiring teachers, the lovely environment of Staveley camp and the company of such good-hearted people. And the mouse. Mustn't forget the mouse. Who will almost certainly go on to an auspicious rebirth after the special funeral rites it was given.

It was very special to have the Zen and Insight traditions coming together for the first time and there was much appreciation from participants for the opportunity to taste another way. Zen made it's appearance in a little yatra (single file pilgrimage) down to the river, the exhortation to make the most of the time we have to practice, some energising chanting (yes, also for the mouse), and talks on working with koans (questions to confound the mind). Subhana reflected on the differences and similarities between the two traditions in her dharma talks.

Workshops were offered each day by the three teachers, Subhana, Arthur and Jeremy, (it was very hard to choose between them at times), and other participants supplemented this with sessions on things they were passionate about – Caz on

insight dialogue (mindful speaking); Christine on care for the environment; Julie on the suttas; David on post-modernism (or something like that). Topics ranged through loving-kindness, clinging and non-clinging, freedom, working with hindrances, turning the heart to joy, and non-violent communication, to finding our deepest purpose. In between Leslie and David offered the tea ceremony. I'm sure I've probably missed some – apologies – there was so much going on.

Thanks to some very artistic participants a beautiful yin-yang mandala was constructed (very appropriate for a Zen-Insight gathering – of course the Zen tradition got to be the 'dark' side – well, they will insist on wearing black!), and we all enjoyed contributing our own little piece of art, made up of objects found in the local environment. Lit with candles late one evening, the group walked the circular path while chanting in uplifting three part harmony. In a graphic illustration of non-clinging, a final destruction ritual at the close of the gathering saw everything returned to it's original nature.

Thank you to all who participated, particularly those who helped organise and make it possible.



## FREEDOM

What is freedom? We have so many ideas about what freedom might be, and it is important to be clear in our practice what it is we are trying to find freedom from. It's not freedom from our bodies or minds, or freedom from thoughts - the Buddha taught freedom from suffering, from the contracted view of who we are. Freedom is not a licence to do whatever we want! (though our society seems often to have this view of freedom).

Subhana told a Zen story about finding yourself in a stone grave, with no windows, a door that is locked from outside, and asked the question "how do you find freedom in this situation?"

Questions like those used in Zen koans that have the potency to open the mind are important in our practice. Questions such as:

- Who/what is the observer?
- What is freedom?
- Who is hearing?
- When we no longer cling to the senses what is released?
- What is this?
- What is your original face?

These questions are useful not only when we are in a refined state of mind, but can be asked every day.

## SO HOW WAS THE GATHERING? PARTICIPANTS COMMENT:

This week has been the happiest of my life. I know I can go home and face whatever comes with strength and some grace because you beautiful kind and wise people have sustained me. Thank you.

Enormously fruitful to have a dialogue between different traditions. Hugely enriching experience. We have so much to learn from each other. Little insights just keep coming by connecting with others in this open forum.

*Holger Korth*

This was my second gathering, and it was at least as good as the first. It's a great opportunity to meet some really fantastic and interesting people, an opportunity to make sense of much that happens at silent retreats, and an opportunity to learn from the experiences and understandings of others. It is also good to er... recall the benefits of insight practice and to recharge and nourish myself in preparation for the coming year. After two of these gatherings I have a much stronger sense of the benefits and potential of sangha as a place from which to draw support. This is an important event for seeing our collective 'strength', and, I think, for building it.

*Chrys Horn*

I am amazed how a week with openhearted people can provide the ground to open up from the depth of my fears, where years of friendships fail to provide me with that ground.

*Kay*



Finding freedom can be very funny

*Seen at a sangha member's home:*

**My problem is that half of my mind is  
manufacturing bullshit...  
and the other half is buying it.  
- It's not unusual.**

## FINDING OUR TRUE PURPOSE

On the final day Jeremy led a very moving and inspiring workshop looking into the deeper purpose in our lives. We started by considering reflections that help to bring a sense of urgency to our practice – our good fortune to be able to practice, and how uncertain our lifespan is.

We looked at how we could deepen in our practice, how we could bring 'the quivering heart's response' to the pain of the world, and ended by considering what our deepest intention is, and what steps each of us intend to take to make the most of this precious life. Participants shared their intentions with the group, and some have kindly offered to share their deeply inspiring intentions with the wider sangha.

I vow to practice respect.

🙏

For the sake of all beings, I vow to deepen my understanding and increase my strength; to go out and by example show that there is another way.

🙏

I vow to practice for HOPE (Helping Other Possibilities Emerge), not hope to practice.

🙏

To be true to myself and accept other people's truth.

🙏

I vow to meet and encourage others as being fundamentally okay just as they are.

🙏

I vow to entertain the possibility that my enemies may be my dearest teachers.

🙏

I am giving up the thought that I am helpless; I am giving up fear and sadness; I take full responsibility for my relationships; I take good care of my needs and am willing to encounter anger, sadness and fear and cut through that; I will get my husband into counselling.

🙏

I will cultivate attention towards the quivering heart of compassion through metta practice, to support right effort in my work and spiritual practice.

🙏

I will have twice daily 'heart checks' with my partner; I will see more of the wider sangha; I will go on with sangha building where I live; I will learn more about how to encourage 'heart-changing' along with 'mind-changing' whenever I have an opportunity to teach others.

🙏

I will advocate for environmentally sensitive design of infrastructure.

🙏

I will attempt to respond to each person in my life as if they were myself.



Kuan Yin, the one who hears the cries of the world

### The Unbroken

There is a brokenness  
Out of which comes the unbroken,  
A shatteredness out  
Of which blooms the unshatterable,  
There is a sorrow  
Beyond all grief which leads to joy  
And a fragility  
Out of whose depths emerges strength,

There is a hollow space  
Too vast for words  
Through which we pass with each loss,  
Out of whose darkness  
We are sanctioned into being.

There is a cry deeper than all sound  
Whose serrated edges cut the heart  
As we break open  
To the place inside which is unbreakable  
And whole,  
While learning to sing.  
~ *Rashani*



Tea bag eyes

I stand with the sun warm and  
bright on my back.  
My shadow is on the ground in  
front of me.

Each step forward  
I step into my shadow,  
And my shadow moves  
Across the damp cut grass.  
My shadow is full of grass  
growing,  
In every direction  
Like wild uncombed hair.  
Each step forward  
The universe passes through me.  
*Caz*

### Bad Jokes

What do you call a dyslexic Buddhist  
playwright?  
A dharmatist.

What do you call a Buddhist choir?  
A songha.

Keyboard clattering  
Sun shines on lonely cushion  
Almost free again

*~PhD Haiku from Meg*



Protective apparel for onion-chopping (goggles)

### SONGS FOR THE SONGHA

I am starting to compile a collection of chants, rounds, sung graces, waiata, part songs, etc, suitable for chanting/singing together at dharma gatherings and other occasions when the sangha feels that singing is the most beautiful form of silence.

If you have something you would like to contribute (preferably with music as well as words, and in a form which can be easily photocopied) then please post it to me at P.O.Box 46, Diamond Harbour 8941. If you have the words but can't locate a copy of the music, give me a call (329 4588), sing me the tune, and we can discuss what the options are.

*Christine Dann*



## PERFORMANCE NIGHT

The final night of the gathering was a time for creative expression. Participants offered poems, songs, and other performance pieces (see first page). We were treated to a theatrical version of one of the Buddhist suttas, which involved considerable audience participation and included a demon.



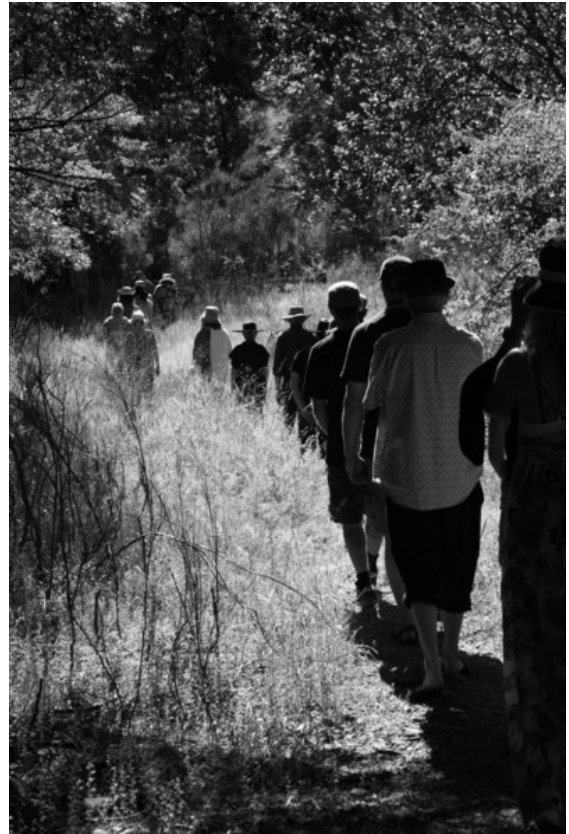
Saccaka brags that he will beat the Buddha in discussion...



But the Buddha shows him the error of his ways and asks him a question he does not want to answer...



“If anyone, when asked a question by the Buddha, refuses to answer for a third time, his head splits into seven pieces there and then.”



The Yatra

## SITTING GROUP NEWS

Our new format has been operating for a few months now. People from the southeast side of town are enjoying being able to get to sitting group more easily once a month. To recap in case you are confused, the following happens each month:

- First Wed: Nothing out of the ordinary
- Second Wed: Talk/Facilitated Discussion
- Third Wed: Public Talk by Russell
- Fourth Wed: Held at Opawa Zendo

Russell resumed his monthly talks in February with a talk on the importance of Beginner's Mind. The next talk will be Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> March.

Apart from the fourth Wed of the month meetings take place at 104 Merivale Lane in the staffroom of Ferndale School. The evening starts at 7.30pm and runs through to 9.15pm.

The Opawa Zendo is located at 4 Kennedy Place, Opawa on the corner of Opawa Rd opposite the Hillsborough Domain. By car you need to be travelling south to turn into Kennedy Place. Parking is not allowed on Kennedy Place, so please park in the Bremca Ltd carpark at 10 Kennedy Place.



## EARTH-CARERS SUPPORT GROUP FORMING

If you have a passion for protecting and restoring the natural environment, whether voluntarily or as a professional, and would like to be in regular, supportive contact with other meditators who feel the same way, then the Earth-Carers Mindfulness Support Group initiated at the recent Dharma Gathering could be just what you are looking for.

Exactly what the group does and how it does it are still being developed, but at this point we are looking at meeting 7 times a year, perhaps with daytime gatherings on the third or fourth weekends of March and September (around the autumn and spring equinoxes) and early-evening week day gatherings at six weekly intervals the rest of the time. Whenever we gather, the programme will include some meditation, a shared meal, and a discussion of our current and planned earth-care projects. Wherever time allows there will also be an extra - a nature walk, a bike ride, some tree-planting or weed-busting, a film, an organic garden visit, a talk from a special guest - whatever opportunities arise.

The first gathering for 2010 will be on Sunday March 21, from 12 noon to 5 p.m. at Christine Dann's place in Port Levy. The second one will be at Chrys Horn's place next to the Halswell Quarry Park on from 3 - 7 p.m. on Saturday May 1.

To join the group please send an email to Chrys Horn [Chrys.Horn@xtra.co.nz](mailto:Chrys.Horn@xtra.co.nz) giving all your contact details, or call Chrys on 338 0313.

I lie down into running  
bubbling water.  
Rocky creek bottom (up).  
The stream flows through  
me.  
I bring back flowers from  
the other shore,  
And the river in my ears.  
*Caz*

## DHARMA GATHERING COMMENTS CONT...

I enjoyed everything! It was interesting to see a resistance to the little exercises, my first reaction each time was "I don't want to do it", but each and every time I enjoyed them and found them valuable. It reminded me of when I thought I hated cooking but found that the aversion was to the thought of cooking, not the activity itself!

The gathering was wonderful. It was an environment of warmth and sharing, discussion and laughter. I gained immensely from the workshops, the evening talks and the inquiry sessions. On each of these occasions something was either clarified, revealed, or I'd gain a small window of insight into an aspect of Buddhist teaching that up until that point I hadn't quite understood or connected with (i.e. made a connection between the written words and what they meant in relation to the cushion and beyond). I actually found that clarification through workshop and dialogue aided in my sitting practice.

*Rachel Johnston*

Revealing. Having a week to meditate was lovely. The workshops were interesting. It gave me the space to get some perspective on my life and see the connection between meditation and daily life - as a moment by moment process of having awareness both on and off the cushion.

Interesting. Some things quite insightful, other things just went straight over my head. Enjoyed inquiry, the mandala, some of the performances of the last evening. Thanks for putting this together.

### Anything you particularly liked?

- The people. The teachers. The teachings.
- The inquiry sessions, were, for me, a place of considerable learning, as were the workshops. I find it tremendously helpful to hear discussion and learn something of how others have used and experienced insight practice. I also really enjoyed the building of the mandala and the shared laughing and crying.
- Everything! But especially the building of the mandala and the yatra walk, and the experiential workshops. The mix of teachings from the two traditions Zen and Insight, made the gathering particularly special, as the did the warmth, experience and generosity of the teachers - my heartfelt thanks to the wonderful teachers and fellow 'dharma gatherers'.
- Swimming, poetry, marmalade, bouncing on the trampoline, Subhana's voice, Arthur's song...

## Booking Procedures

Please phone **Paul** on **381 0444** for a retreat registration form. The completed form and a deposit of \$50.00 should be sent to **6 Trent St, Christchurch**. Please make cheques payable to **Southern Insight Meditation**. Stamped addressed envelopes are appreciated when booking. Further information will be sent to you on receipt of your deposit. Please note that retreats will only run if there are sufficient registrations.

## Refunds of Deposits

The deposit for retreats is refundable up to the closing date of the retreat booked, less a \$5.00 charge for administration costs. Deposits cannot be refunded after the retreat closing date, and the money will be put into the Top-Up Fund.

## Top Up Fund

The top-up fund is for those who are unable to afford the cost of a retreat. Southern Insight aims to make retreats as accessible as possible to all, and it is possible to pay less than the lower amount in the sliding scale for a retreat. We encourage people to make use of this fund, which, thanks to the generosity of others who attend our retreats, is currently in a healthy state.

## Contact Details for Southern Insight

**E-mail:** [southern.insight.meditation@xtra.co.nz](mailto:southern.insight.meditation@xtra.co.nz)

**Post:** 16 Ward Street, Christchurch

**Web:** <http://southern.insightmeditation.org.nz>

If you'd like information about retreats or about the group and insight meditation (including lots of opportunities to help with our work) here are the contact details of the Steering group, all of whom would be happy to talk with you:

**Di**                   **338 7070**  
**Meg**               **328 8052**  
**Julie**              [angulijulie@gmail.com](mailto:angulijulie@gmail.com)  
**Dermot**           **381 4617**  
**Rachel**           **379 2548**  
**Sarah**             **027 669 3824**  
**Russell:**  
**southern.insight.meditation@xtra.co.nz**

## Insight Aotearoa

Insight Aotearoa is an e-newsletter for New Zealand's insight meditation practitioners and communities. Posted monthly, it includes articles by and interviews with dharma teachers from around the world as well as a comprehensive listing of events in the insight meditation network across New Zealand. To subscribe (free) visit: [newsletter@insightaotearoa.org](mailto:newsletter@insightaotearoa.org) or write to PO Box 6626, Wellington 6041, Aotearoa New Zealand.

## Receiving our newsletter

**If you did not receive this newsletter by mail and would like to be on our mailing list, please phone Dermot on 381 4617. Any donation towards the cost would be appreciated.**

**If you would like to receive this newsletter and retreat information electronically just contact us at [southern.insight.meditation@xtra.co.nz](mailto:southern.insight.meditation@xtra.co.nz) Write 'SUBSCRIBER' in the subject box.**

## TEACHERS

**Subhana Barzaghi** has practised meditation for over 20 years, is an acknowledged teacher in both the Insight meditation and Zen Buddhist traditions. She teaches 7 day intensive retreats in India, Australia and New Zealand. In 1996 Subhana became the first Australian Zen Roshi and is the spiritual director of the Sydney and Melbourne Zen Centres. She is also the founder of the Kwan Yin Zen Centre in Lismore. Subhana is the mother of two children and works as a counsellor and psychotherapist in Sydney.

**Jeremy Logan** has been involved in Insight Meditation for the last nineteen years, spending several years in the east and in Europe learning and practicing meditation. He has been teaching retreats since 1991 in New Zealand and he has taught in India. He currently lives in the Wairarapa working as a Counsellor and facilitating Stopping Violence programmes for men.

**Stephen Batchelor** was born in Scotland and educated at Watford Grammar School, England, and in Buddhist monasteries in India, Switzerland and Korea. He has translated and written several books on Buddhism, including *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*, *Alone with Others*, *The Faith to Doubt*, *The Tibet Guide* (winner of the 1988 Thomas Cook Award), *The Awakening of the West* (joint-winner of the 1994 Tricycle Award), *Buddhism Without Beliefs* and, most recently, *Verses from the Center: A Buddhist Vision of the Sublime*. He lectures and conducts meditation retreats worldwide, is a contributing editor to *Tricycle: the Buddhist Review*, a guiding teacher at Gaia House Retreat Centre, and co-founder of Sharpham College for Buddhist Studies and Contemporary Enquiry. He lives with his wife Martine in France.

**Martine Batchelor** spent ten years in a Korean monastery studying Zen Buddhism. She is now a guiding teacher at Gaia House meditation retreat centre and was a founding teacher of the Sharpham College of Buddhist Studies and Contemporary Enquiry, both in Devon. With her husband Stephen, she leads meditation retreats worldwide. She has published many magazine articles on Buddhism and modern living, and her books include *The Way of Korean Zen* (translated from the Korean), *Buddhism and Ecology*, *Walking on Lotus Flowers* and *Principles of Zen*. Her latest book is *'Meditation for Life'*. She lives in Southwest France.

Christchurch Meditation Group  
Ferndale School  
104 Merivale Lane  
Christchurch  
Wednesdays 7.30 – 9.15pm

**BEGINNER'S COURSE IN  
MEDITATION**

Starts in March 2010  
Please contact Di on 338 7070 for more  
information and to enrol

If undelivered, please return to:  
13 Dacre Street  
Christchurch